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BOROUGH OF WIDNES



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF
HEALTH

FOR

1942

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
HEALTH COMMITTEE

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report, which deals with the Vital Statistics and Sanitary Administration of the Borough of Widnes for the year 1942.

The Report is much curtailed and all statistical tables from which population figures can be deduced have been omitted. The necessary data have, however, been recorded and will be available for publication after the war.

The Birth rate for the year was lower than that of the preceding year and of the average for the previous five years. The general Death rate, the Death rate from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and the Infant Mortality rate were below the rates for the preceding year. The mortality rates are therefore highly satisfactory.

The number of cases of Scarlet Fever was 261 as compared with 98 during 1941. The number of cases of Diphtheria was 95 as compared with 160 during 1941. There were, however, 4 deaths from Diphtheria as compared with 9 during 1941. None of the children who died from this disease during the two years had been immunised.

A scheme providing free immunisation against Diphtheria was put into operation in January, 1941. The number of children immunised during the past two years was as follows :—

Year		Under 5 years of age	Over 5 years of age	Total
1941	...	1026	4204	5230
1942	...	1495	708	2203
Total	...	<hr/> 2521 <hr/>	<hr/> 4912 <hr/>	<hr/> 7433 <hr/>

At the end of 1942 the percentages of children immunised were :— under 5 years of age—79% ; over 5 years of age—75%. Although these figures are better than those of similar industrial areas a further effort will be made during 1943 to secure even better results. The members of the staff interview personally every parent and their efforts to obtain parental consent are frequently augmented by the Clergy, Medical Practitioners and School Teachers.

The Maternity and Child Welfare Services were fully extended, the attendances at the Health Centre and Mill Brow Clinic being greater than ever. The majority of the children under 5 years of age suffering from squint were referred to the Eye Specialist for examination and attend regularly for re-inspection.

A comprehensive scheme for the establishment of 16 day nurseries was approved by the Minister of Health in 1941, and early in the year 1942, fifteen of them were functioning. In view of the fact that the majority of the nurseries were attached to existing Elementary Schools a mutual agreement was made with the Education Authority whereby the latter controlled the administrative and educational arrangements and the Health Authority the medical and nursing.

Six houses were completed during the year on the Lowerhouse Lane Estate and were let to families which were overcrowded. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities 218 houses were being erected on this estate, but the Minister of Health suspended the work and only consented to the completion of 52. There is no indication that the Minister will entertain the continuance of the housing programme until the emergency has passed. It is, however, essential that a detailed post-war housing programme should be prepared so that building operations may be commenced without any delay. The shortage of houses is more acute than ever and the department is inundated with applicants. They comprise cases of overcrowding, families living in apartments or in houses which are becoming in a state of disrepair. It is becoming increasingly difficult to secure the repair of defective houses largely on account of the shortage of skilled labour so that the provision of a large number of houses is the most needed requirement.

It is gratifying to report that there was no increase in the incidence of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. There were, however, 30 cases of Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis notified as compared with 16 during 1941. This type is due to infected milk and its prevention will only be secured when the milk supply is pasteurised.

I desire to take this opportunity of thanking the chief officials of the Corporation and those members of the municipal staff who have unstintingly assisted me during a difficult period.

I wish, also, to acknowledge my appreciation of the cordial support afforded me by the members of the Health Committee and the Council.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ALBERT JONES,

Medical Officer of Health.

The following table summarises the Vital Statistics of the Borough :—

	Per 1,000 of Population.				Per 1,000 Births.	
	Birth Rate.	Death Rate.	Death Rate from Tuberculosis of Respiratory System.	Death Rate from Cancer	Maternal Mortality Rate.	Rate of Deaths under 1 year.
Mean of 5 years—						
1937-1941	21.68	14.9	0.65	1.46	2.28	87
Year—						
1941	22.9	14.0	0.68	1.5	2.0	96
1942	20.5	11.5	0.59	1.8	2.21	70
Increase or Decrease in 1942 on Five Years' Average	- 1.18	- 3.4	- 0.06	+ 0.34	- 0.07	- 17
1937-1941						
Previous Year	- 2.4	- 2.5	- 0.09	+ 0.3	+ 0.2	- 26

VITAL STATISTICS—WARDS IN THE BOROUGH—

	Farnworth.	Halton.	Simms Cross	Victoria.	Waterloo.	West Bank.	Ditton.	TOTALS.
Birth-rate per 1000 ...	15.5	26.5	19.3	25.3	18.4	14.8	23.6	20.5
Death-rate per 1000 ...	10.3	11.9	11.2	14.4	8.4	12.1	11.5	11.5
Infantile Death-rate per 1000 Births ...	46	96	64	81	35	155	49	70
Death-rate from Cancer per 1000 ...	2.1	2.4	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.8
Death-rate from Phthisis per 1000 ...	0.3	0.17	0.11	1.7	0.3	1.3	0.76	0.59

(2) *PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME—*

The arrangements made with the Widnes Queen's Nursing Association for the home nursing of children suffering from measles and whooping-cough have operated normally.

(3) *MIDWIFERY—*

The number of midwives practising in the area was 9.

(4) *LABORATORY FACILITIES—**Bacteriological Examinations :*

The number of specimens examined in 1942 was :—

Nasal swabs	...	160	Others	4
Throat swabs	...	787				

(5) *HOSPITALS—*

(a) The number of patients admitted to the Isolation Hospital during 1942 was 367 as compared with 286 during 1941.

(b) A summary of the cases treated at the Accident Hospital during 1941 was :—

Patients in Hospital, December 31st, 1941	...	4
Admitted during 1942	117
Out-Patients during 1942	1266
Re-Visits, Out-Patients during 1942	10245
Operations	156
X-Ray Examinations	939
Deaths	6
Patients in Hospital, December 31st, 1942	...	7

The cases treated in 1941 were : Admissions 130; out-patients 1180; and operations 80.

(6) *MATERNITY HOME—*

The total number of cases admitted to the Home during the year was 299 as compared with 303 during 1941. Of the cases admitted during the year, 204 were residents of the Borough.

(7) *AMBULANCE FACILITIES—*

The Local Authority has provided one motor ambulance for the removal of cases of Infectious Disease to Hospital, one for the removal of patients to Hospitals within or without the Borough, and one for emergencies.

The amount of work done during 1942 by the motor ambulances which are used for non-infectious cases was :—

Patients conveyed to hospitals 677; patients conveyed from hospitals 639; mileage 12,097. The number of patients conveyed to and from hospitals during 1941 was 301 and 320 respectively and the total mileage was 11,042.

(8) CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES—

The Child Welfare and school clinics functioned normally during the year.

The record of home visits paid by the health visitors during the year was :—

To Expectant Mothers : First Visits ...	418	Total Visits ...	1279
Infants under 1 : ,, ,, ...	800	,, ,, ...	4666
Children 1 - 5 : — — —		,, ,, ...	7661

An Ante-Natal Clinic is conducted by Mr. P. Malpas every Wednesday afternoon. The specialist voluntarily conducts an ante-natal clinic at the Maternity Home immediately he has finished his session at the Health Centre. The number of ante-natal cases which attended the clinics was 790, as compared with 737 during 1941.

It was found necessary to arrange for 14 cases to be admitted to the Liverpool Maternity Hospital during the year because of disabilities or defects discovered at the clinic. The number of cases admitted during 1941 was 20. In addition 98 cases were admitted to the Whiston County Hospital, as compared with 80 during 1941.

From its inception the work at the clinic has not been confined to ante-natal supervision. Patients suffering from disabilities which are the result of childbirth, or from other diseases peculiar to women, are examined, and where necessary are admitted to the Women's Hospital, Liverpool, for operative treatment. 138 such cases were examined during the year 1942. The services of the specialist are also at the disposal of the medical practitioners for cases of difficult labour and puerperal disorders, and are being more frequently used.

A scheme for the examination and treatment of crippled children was put into operation in January, 1926. The Orthopædic surgeon visits Widnes fortnightly to direct the necessary treatment. Children requiring operative treatment are admitted to the Children's Infirmary at Liverpool, the country hospital at Heswall, or the Widnes Accident Hospital.

TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARY—*Chapel Street*—

This is provided by the County Authority, and the Tuberculosis Officer attends on Monday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and Friday afternoons.

IV. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLY—

The water supply of the Borough is obtained by pumping from deep wells in the sandstone. Three samples were analysed by the Public Analyst and 13 by the Bacteriologist to the City of Liverpool and were found to be of excellent quality. The chlorination of water supplies was commenced in November, 1941.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION—

1 waste water closet was converted during the year, so that there are only 4 houses with this type of convenience.

There are 97 privy middens, but they are situated in the rural parts of the Borough, and cannot be converted owing to the absence of adequate sewers.

REFUSE REMOVAL—

This work is carried out entirely by the Highway Committee, and motor transport is mainly used. There are 44 dry ashpits, all the remaining houses in the Borough having portable bins.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT—

A record of the work of the Sanitary Department is as follows :—

Defects or Nuisances : No. Discovered	...	1789
No. Abated	...	1532
No. of Notices served : Informal	...	552
Statutory	...	133
No. of Legal Proceedings taken	...	Nil.
No. of Premises visited	...	5734

Premises kept under observation.	Number of Premises.	Number of Inspections.
Workshops and Workplaces		192
Factories, sanitary accommodation		110
Bakehouses	34	206
Slaughterhouses	1	2
Milkshops	104	320
Cowsheds	23	117
Common Lodginghouses ...	5	96
Visits to premises where cases of Infectious diseases have occurred	379	542
No. of premises disinfected after cases of Infectious Diseases ...	367	—
No. of articles disinfected by steam disinfectant	14548	—

V.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY—

The number of Purveyors of Milk on the register is 104. One dealer's licence for the bottling of T.T. milk, one for the distribution of T.T. milk and one for the distribution of Pasteurised milk, were issued. There are 23 dairy farms in the Borough, most of which are in good order. The Ministry of Agriculture has appointed Mr. P. T. Lindsay as its veterinary officer, and he inspected during the year 266 cows on four occasions. As a result of his inspections, three cows were found to be suffering from tuberculosis and were slaughtered. 3 bacteriological examinations of milk samples taken during the year revealed the presence of tubercle bacilli in one of them.

(b) MEAT—

The amount of meat condemned as unfit for human consumption comprised :—Meat, 781 lbs.; tinned meat, $473\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.; ham, 30 lbs.; tinned pork, $144\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. All these articles were applied to food salvage.

There is one licenced slaughterhouse.

(c) OTHER FOODSTUFFS—

Other foodstuffs condemned comprised :—Fish, 301 lbs.; 7 tins of fish; cheese, 334 lbs.; eggs, 475; 22 tins of dried eggs; butter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.; onions, 36 lbs.; oranges, 30; apples, 2 lbs.; plums, 3,192 lbs.; 33 tins of fruit; 215 tins of vegetables; 44 tins of soup; 219 tins of milk; cake, 422 lbs.; and cereals, 8 ozs.

The following samples were analysed by the Liverpool City Analyst :—

Milk	156	Bread	1
Margarine	4	Coffee	1
Butter	4	Jelly Crystals ...	1
Lard	4	Marmalade	1
Sugar	1	Salt	1
Custard Powder ...	1	Vinegar	1

Proceedings were taken and a conviction obtained with respect to one sample of milk found to be deficient in milk fat.

VI. PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

(i) NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR—

DISEASE.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	95	95	4
Scarlet Fever	261	245	2
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	3	2	1
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—
Pneumonia	69	—	25
Erysipelas	20	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	5	2	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	1	1	—
Measles	632	—	4
Whooping Cough	100	—	1
Infantile Paralysis	—	—	—
Tuberculosis—			
(a) Pulmonary ... { M	18	—	13
{ F	19	—	12
{ Total ...	37	—	25
(b) Non-Pulmonary { M	13	—	1
{ F	17	—	2
{ Total ...	30	—	3

The number of cases of Scarlet Fever notified during 1941 was 98.

The number of cases of Diphtheria notified during the preceding four years was :—1938—240; 1939—180; 1940—200; 1941—160.

2,062,000 units of Diphtheria Anti-toxin and 72,000 units of Scarlet Fever Anti-toxin were used during the year.

PUERPERAL FEVER AND PUERPERAL PYREXIA. Three cases of Puerperal Pyrexia were notified and two were admitted to Whiston County Hospital.

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM. Five cases were notified during the year, two of which were admitted to hospital. The remaining cases received treatment at home. No injury to vision resulted among any of the cases.

TUBERCULOSIS. The number of cases of Tuberculosis and of all deaths from the disease during 1942 will be found in the following table :—

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.	Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.	Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.	Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.
Years								
0-1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5	—	1	4	2	—	1	1	1
5-10	—	—	4	7	—	—	—	—
10-15	—	2	2	1	—	1	—	—
15-20	4	3	1	1	—	3	—	1
20-25	—	4	1	3	—	3	—	—
25-35	3	3	—	2	3	—	—	—
35-45	4	1	1	—	5	3	—	—
45-55	3	2	—	1	1	1	—	—
55-65	2	2	—	—	4	—	—	—
65 - upwards	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	18	19	13	17	13	12	1	2
	37		30		25		3	

HOUSING STATISTICS.

NO. OF NEW HOUSES ERECTED DURING THE YEAR—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under b) ...	6
(i) By the local authority	6
(ii) By other bodies or persons	—
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts—	
(i) By the local authority	6

Eradication of Bed Bugs :—

27 houses belonging to the Local Authority, and 61 private houses and other premises were sprayed during the year because of verminous infestation. A substance known as “Zaldecide” was used in an electric spray. This was carried out by an employee of the Local Authority. The dis-infestation of the furniture of tenants removed from condemned houses was carried out by a contractor by means of hydrocyanic acid.

In addition, 367 houses were disinfected by an employee of the Isolation Hospital. The steam disinfecter at the latter institution was extensively used, the number of articles treated exceeding that of the previous year by 2,945. An appreciable number of the latter consisted of blankets used by fire guards and civil defence personnel. Arrangements have been made for the regular disinfection of blankets used by the various services with a view to preventing infestation.

